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chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *uáhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), *i. e.* »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M -764 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

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relatives of the departed cannot live safely in it. This is the reason why in the Gran Chaco a traveller so often encounters remains of Indian villages which have evidently been burnt and abandoned by their inhabitants. The radical destruction of the whole village is always resorted to when several deaths have taken place at short intervals. The relatives of the deceased, when they abandon their own village, generally go and live with their relatives and friends in a neighbouring village, where they stay for some time, or until they decide to found a new settlement in some other part of the country. Custom requires that when the mourners arrive at the other village, they shall be received with wailing.

The Tobas, although they always burn the house where a death has taken place, do not as a rule deem it necessary to destroy the whole village. Similarly the relatives of the deceased generally remain there, building themselves a new dwelling; in other cases they leave the place for some time. The other inhabitants of the village, on the other hand, make no notable change in their mode of life, since they are not to the same extent exposed to danger from the death-spirit as the nearest relations.

Weeping and wailing plays an important part among the mourning ceremonies of the Indians, although it is always limited to the women and the children. The fact that wailing is ceremonial clearly appears from the circumstances under which it takes place. Although it is beyond doubt that the Indians are capable of real feelings of sorrow at the death of a near relation, yet their intense fear of death — including the fear of the dead body — is apparent throughout their mourning customs. The object of the wailing seems to be partly to propitiate the spirit of the departed relative by showing him how deeply the survivors grieve at his death, partly to frighten away the death-demon by the noise. The latter point of view is probably the most important. Wailing is continued for several months after the death. The length of the wailing period varies according to the social importance of the deceased. A great chief is mourned in all tribes for longer than an ordinary member of the community, in some cases up to a whole year. As to the manner of wailing there is a marked distinction between the Tobas and the Mataco on the one hand, and the Choroti on the other. The wailing of the Toba women is like a greatly exaggerated loud crying and sobbing which is seemingly the expression of a desperate sorrow. The wailing of the Choroti women is calmer and more like the weeping of a child. Every lamentation consists of a series of sounds produced in a high falsetto voice and